

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

19 September 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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## A Note about the 12 September 2003 HIO Update

It came to our attention last weekend that some people received multiple copies of the 12 September HIO Update. The cause of the error was determined to be a problem with one of the exchange servers at CHPPM. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

## HOT TOPICS

### Blinking Dots May Help Smokers Quit

11 September – MSNBC News reported former smokers trying not to resume the habit may soon be able to fight cravings for a cigarette by looking at flickering dots on a hand-held computer. Dr. Jon May told a British science conference that cravings involve mental as well as biological components and that imagery tasks such as visualizing a tennis match help reduce the urge to smoke. He and his team have developed a computer program using blinking dots and are working on a smaller version that former smokers would be able to carry around with them on a Palm Pilot and call up whenever they crave a cigarette. “If our hypothesis is right, then watching that little flickery dots program should be as good as our mental imagery task and might help the craving go away,” said May, a psychologist at the University of Sheffield in northern England. [View Article](#)

### Dramatic Rise Seen in Worrisome Gut Microbes

16 September – Reuters reported a group of drug-resistant microbes that infect the intestine have become much more common among hospitalized patients and in the general community over the last decade, a Spanish team of researchers report. The bacteria are called extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing Enterobacteriaceae. The findings are concerning because these microbes are resistant to cephalosporins, and most can evade other types of antibiotics too. The researchers compared more than 1200 stool samples collected from hospitalized and non-hospitalized patients in 1991 with 400 stool samples collected in 2003. The 2003 samples included ones from healthy individuals, as well as from hospitalized and non-hospitalized patients. In 1991, 0.3 percent of hospitalized patients who carried gut bacteria had ESBL-producing microbes, the authors

note. In 2003, 7.5 percent of individuals carried these microbes. Among hospitalized patients, however, the rate was even higher -- 10.7 percent. [View Article](#)

## Drinking Doubles Risk of Colon Cancer among Men

13 September – Yahoo News reported men who drink alcohol on a regular basis are twice more likely to develop [colon cancer](#) than those who do not, a report said, citing a study by a Japanese cancer center. The research team reached the conclusion after studying the lifestyle of about 58,000 men and women, Kyodo news agency said. Researchers studied the lifestyle of the sample people, who were aged between 40 and 79, over a three-year period to 1990 and conducted follow-ups that lasted seven-and-a-half years on average. The team found that about 420 of the 58,000 people developed colon cancer during the follow-up period, and calculated the case rate of colon cancer among drinkers, non-drinkers and those who were abstaining from drinking [View Article](#)

## Hot Water Pipes Tied to Legionnaires

15 September – ABC News reported outbreaks of [Legionnaires disease](#) are often blamed on germs spewing from air conditioning systems in big buildings, but new research shows home hot water pipes can also be a common source of the disease. Legionnaires is a form of pneumonia caused by a bug that occurs naturally in water. The latest work, combined with earlier studies, suggests the bacteria often grow in the slimy gunk lining residential hot water pipes, and home water may be responsible for about 20 percent of cases. [View Article](#)

## Mosquito Coils May Contain Carcinogen

15 September – Health Day News reported researchers from the University of California at Riverside recently tested more than 50 mosquito repellent coils purchased in Indonesia and at several Asian markets in California, and found they contained varying levels of a pesticide, S-2, that releases cancer-causing particles when burned. Of more concern was that the researchers found S-2 in samples of mosquito coils purchased in California. S-2 shouldn't be in any products sold in the United States because it's banned by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency either as a main or secondary ingredient, according to the study. Not surprisingly, the coil labels didn't disclose the presence of S-2. Results of the study appear in the September 2003 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives. [View Article](#)

## Smallpox Vaccine May Fight AIDS

11 September — MSNBC News reported the smallpox vaccine may help protect people against the [AIDS](#) virus, U.S. researchers said on Thursday. A team at Virginia's George Mason University said they had shown, in lab dishes, that blood cells from people vaccinated against smallpox were four times less likely to become infected by the AIDS virus. [View Article](#)

## Study: Simple Way to Reduce HIV Transmission from Mom to Baby

13 September –The Lancet reported Johns Hopkins and Ugandan researchers report final results of a study showing that a safe, simple and inexpensive treatment reduces transmission of [HIV](#) from mothers to babies during childbirth and the first few weeks of life, offering a good chance to curb the spread of HIV. In their study of more than 600 women in Uganda, giving one dose of nevirapine, a common HIV-fighting drug, to HIV-positive mothers during labor, and one dose to their newborns, reduced transmission by 41 percent, compared to a multi-dose regimen of the drug zidovudine, commonly called AZT. Africa is home to roughly 30 million HIV-positive people, about 3 million of

whom are pregnant women. The report documents all the babies' health at 6 to 8 weeks and at 18 months. [View Article](#)

## Sugar Preserves Blood Platelets

11 September – CBS News reported a little dab of sugar may double the shelf life of blood platelets, a lifesaving clotting component that is in chronic short supply because of spoilage. Harvard University researchers report this week in the journal *Science* that laboratory tests show that putting a small amount of galactose, a type of sugar, into isolated platelets allows the blood components to be refrigerated and usefully preserved for at least 12 days. That more than doubles the shelf life of the current routine, which is to store the platelets at room temperature for only five days. Because of spoilage, more than 25 percent of all platelets taken from donated blood must be discarded. Extending the shelf life of platelets would significantly improve the supply, experts say. [View Article](#)

## Wild Flower 'May Treat Cancer'

14 September – BBC News reported an extract from a wild flower could one day be used to treat a wide range of aggressive cancers, a study suggests. Researchers in the United States have found that cyclopamine, which is a compound of corn lily, may be able to shrink tumors. They believe it could be an effective treatment for cancer of the pancreas, stomach, esophagus and biliary tract. The tests were carried out on mice and on human cells in a laboratory, so further studies are needed to see if it could be effective in humans. [View Article](#)

# USEUCOM

## AIDS up 12 Percent in S. Africa

10 September – Global Health reported the number of South Africans carrying the [AIDS](#) virus jumped by an estimated 12 percent in 2002, but the spread of the disease may be slowing down, the government said on Wednesday. A report by the National Department of Health published on Wednesday estimated that 5.3 million of South Africa's 44 million people had HIV in 2002, compared to 4.7 million in 2001. [View Article](#)

## Death Rate High in Russian Army

13 September – BBC News reported figures recently released by the Russian Ministry of Defense show that so far this year some 1,200 military personnel have been killed in non-combat circumstances. Accidents, carelessness, bullying and suicide are cited as the main causes. The high figure continues a trend which has been occurring in the Russian military for some years. For at least the fifth year in a row, more Russian servicemen are being killed in non-combat situations than in fighting. [View Article](#)

## Ireland: *E. coli* Infects 9 Children

16 September – ProMed reported nine children have been diagnosed with the potentially fatal [Escherichia coli O157](#) infection at a nursery in Antrim, Northern Ireland. Laura's Lodge Day Nursery closed voluntarily on Thu 11 Sep 2003 following advice from environmental health officers and the Northern Health Board. Earlier that day, 2 children had been sick, and the previous week another child was found to have *E. coli* O157. 60 children and staff are being screened for the illness, and the

Northern Health Board is running further checks on children who had initially tested negative. The board confirmed on Mon 15 Sep 2003 9 children at the nursery were now infected, and that finding the source of the outbreak was its main objective. [View Report](#)

## Italy Estimates 4,000 Heat Deaths

11 September – CBS News reported the heat wave that scorched Europe this summer may be to blame in the deaths of more than 4,000 elderly Italians, the Health Ministry said, offering its first official figures related to the searing temperatures. The ministry said 34,071 people over the age of 65 died during the period of July 16 to Aug. 15, the height of the heat wave. That's 4,175 more than the same time last year. Officials from the ministry's Superior Health Institute, which compiled the figures, said more study was needed to determine if the deaths could be blamed entirely on the heat. But they stressed that the weather clearly played a role. "There is a relationship between heat peaks and mortality," said Dr. Donato Greco, an official with the institute. [View Article](#)

## Local Scientists Get Malaria Drug

12 September – AllAfrica.com reported Ugandan scientists have ascertained that a local herb that grows in most parts of Uganda is effective in curing [malaria](#), including strains that are resistant to conventional drugs. Dr. Goretti Nambatya, the National Chemotherapeutics Laboratory (NCTL) director yesterday said they identified the herb through countrywide surveys in which they collected a variety of herbal concoctions. She said the herb had proved effective when tested on a few patients who could not afford the conventional medicines, and those suffering from drug-resistant malaria. The scientists are preparing for large-scale tests, based on World Health Organisation guidelines, before recommending the herb for industrial processing. [View Article](#)

## More Malaria for Liberia Marines

11 September – CBS News reported the number of [malaria](#) cases among U.S. Marines serving in Liberia rose again Thursday, with 51 showing symptoms of the illness, defense officials said. Five new patients were identified with mild cases and were treated aboard the USS Iowa Jima rather than evacuated out of the region, officials said. Navy doctors are investigating what they say is an unusually high rate of the illness among service members who were in Liberia only briefly last month on a peacekeeping mission, then returned to a three-ship amphibious group offshore. The 51 sickened represent almost a fourth of some 225 who went ashore to help West African peacekeepers last month. They include an Army soldier, three sailors and one civilian, with the rest Marines. [View Article](#)

## Republic of Mordovia: First Fatal Case of Rabies Since 1985

13 September – ProMed reported the first fatal case of [rabies](#) in the last 18 years was registered in the Republic of Mordovia. A teenager was hospitalized at the Krasnoslobodskaya Hospital with clinical symptoms of rabies and has since died, according to Republic Epidemiologic Surveillance Center. The 16-year-old boy was admitted to the hospital some time after being bitten by a cat. He was in emergency condition and was treated in the intensive care unit. After the preliminary diagnosis had been confirmed, it was apparent that there was no hope of recovery. All who had contact with the boy and with animals in his village were vaccinated. The last fatal case of rabies in Mordovia occurred in 1985. However, during the last 6 months 14 animals with rabies have been detected in the Republic. These include foxes, dogs, and cats, some of them domestic animals. [View Report](#)

## Serous Meningitis Outbreaks in Belarus and Russia

15 September – ProMed reported 495 cases of [enterovirus](#) infection have been registered so far in Minsk [the capital of Belarus]. According to the Belarus Republic Center of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Public Health about 90 of the people affected by "summer flu" are children. On average about 30 children are being admitted every day to the children's hospital. Despite the increased incidence of enteroviral infection, and [serous meningitis](#) in particular, public officials are not considering it an epidemic. For prevention purposes, chlorination of drinking water has been undertaken and sanitary and epidemiologic control in food producing factories is being increased. In Russia, The number of people diagnosed with serous meningitis has increased to 20. According to the city of Stavropol Epidemiologic Surveillance Center there are 3 adults among the 20 infected. The remainder are children aged 10 and 11 years. [View Report](#)

## Smoke Blankets Lisbon as Forest Fires Rake Portugal

13 September – Yahoo News reported more than 1,000 firefighters battled to control forest blazes in Portugal including two that blanketed the capital Lisbon in smoke. With Portugal already facing its worst forest fire season on record, Prime Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso blamed an upsurge this week on arson. "Things are very difficult when the firefighters put out fires and criminal hands light them," he said in remarks carried on private TSF radio. Durao Barroso vowed a complete investigation. A spokesman for the National Emergency Operations Center said firefighters were trying to contain three blazes, including one in coastal mountains about 120 miles south of Lisbon. Fires in Loures, about 10 miles north of central Lisbon, and in Mafra, about 25 miles north of the capital, wreathed Lisbon in smoke by late afternoon. [View Article](#)

## South Africa: Limpopo to Contain Bilharzia Outbreak

12 September – AllAfrica.com reported the Limpopo Department of Health will soon conduct visits throughout the province and identify areas with a potential of harboring [Bilharzia \(Schistosomiasis\)](#), says spokesperson Phuti Seloba. The decision follows a recent outbreak of the disease in Vhembe District, where some residents have been diagnosed bilharzia positive. Mr Seloba said the visits would help the department come up with preventative methods such as advising communities against bilharzia infective areas. He said after identifying places hit by the bilharzia outbreak, the department would launch awareness campaigns on how to employ preventative methods. [View Article](#) [View Article 2](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Exposure to 'Benefits of Western Life' Harmful to Youth, says WHO

13 September – VOA News reported the World Health Organization says the health of young people throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia is suffering, as they are increasingly exposed to the so-called "benefits" of western life. Studies show that people under 30 account for 84 percent of new cases of HIV-AIDS in the eastern half of Europe, compared with 30 percent in the west. The regional director for Europe, Marc Danzon, says young East Europeans are beginning to "catch up" with problems long apparent in the more affluent west. [View Article](#)

## Smoking Tied to Pneumonia Cases in War Zones

11 September – ProMed reported the puzzling cluster of [pneumonia](#) cases among American troops in Iraq and other countries in the war region seems to be partly related to the fact that many had taken up smoking shortly before they became ill, Pentagon officials said. 2 teams of military and civilian epidemiologists and environmental health specialists have been investigating a cluster of 19 cases of severe pneumonia, including 2 deaths, that occurred from 1 Mar through August 2003. The investigators found that 4 of the 19 patients had suffered bacterial pneumonia. Of the other 15 cases, 10, including the 2 men who died, had markedly increased numbers of a certain type of white blood cell known as an eosinophil. The eosinophil count was from 4 to 11 times higher than normal. The investigators are leaning towards a noninfectious cause and are focusing on one finding that 9 of the 10 patients with high eosinophil counts reported that they had started smoking. Tobacco smoke is a prime suspect because it is known to damage lungs and increase their susceptibility to pneumonia. Also, at least one published paper has reported a similar link between smoking and severe pneumonia. A combination of stress, heat, dust, and other factors may have acted in concert with smoking to cause illness, said Col. Bob DeFraithe, the Army's chief of preventive medicine. Pentagon officials provided no information on what cigarette brand the sick individuals smoked but said such information could come from additional studies that are being planned. [View Report](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### Anger Builds over EPA's 9-11 Report

11 September – MSNBC News reported two years after the World Trade Center attacks, New Yorkers say they're outraged by reports that the White House influenced the Environmental Protection Agency to downplay hazards posed by the toxic dust that fell in an avalanche over the city. The EPA's acting chief defends the agency's actions after the attacks, saying it hopes to be better prepared for "the next time." [View Article](#)

### Eye Diseases on the Increase

12 September – Health Day News reported the number of elderly Americans with common age-related eye diseases has increased significantly over the past decade, says a study in the September issue of the Archives of Ophthalmology. The Duke University-led study analyzed a national sample of Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 and older and recorded the incidence of diabetic retinitis, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration. Overall, the proportion of people with at least one of the three diseases increased from 13.4 percent to 45.4 percent between 1991 and 1999. [View Article](#)

### FDA Approves First in New Class of Antibiotics

12 September - The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the approval of Cubicin (daptomycin for injection) for the treatment of complicated skin and skin structure infections. These are serious infections, usually occurring in hospitalized patients, and include major abscesses, post-surgical skin wound infections, and infected ulcers. Cubicin is the first approved product in a new class of antibiotics called cyclic lipopeptide antibacterial agents. Cubicin treats infections in a way that is distinct from any other antibiotic. [View Article](#)

## Malaria Puts Area on Alert - Florida

15 September - News Press reported health officials are asking people in Hendry and Glades counties to be on the lookout for [malaria](#) and other mosquito-borne illnesses. The two counties border Palm Beach County, where seven people are confirmed to have malaria. Malaria has been confirmed in seven Palm Beach County residents this year. "Due to increased mosquito activity throughout the state and a number of cases of malaria in nearby Palm Beach County, the department of health feels it best to increase surveillance in both of these counties," said Hendry and Glades County Health Departments Director Martha E. Valiant in a written statement. [View Article](#)

## Meth Threatens Hawaii's Way of Life

12 September – MSNBC News reported on the streets, it's known as "ice" - the highly pure, crystalline form of methamphetamine whose use across the Hawaiian Islands has reached epidemic levels. The state's drug-fighting efforts culminate 15 September when Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona convenes a statewide drug summit to discuss ways to beat back the menace. Smoking it provides a high so intense and long-lasting that addiction can be instant, withdrawal is excruciating and brain damage often permanent. Since the drug's introduction from Asia in the mid-1980s, ice has burrowed into every community in Hawaii, becoming widely used and readily available. The drug threatens the very way of life in these multicultural islands, where close-knit families often live three generations to a household, officials say. [View Article](#)

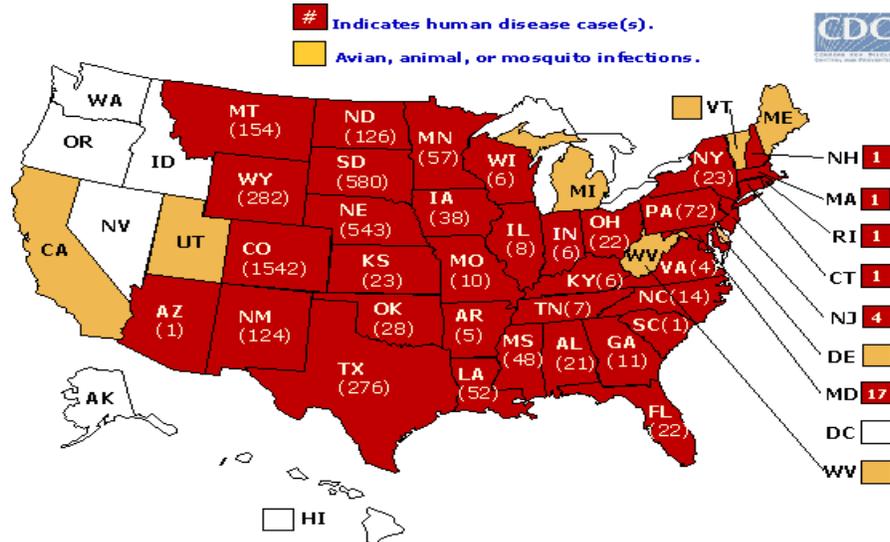
## Mold Outbreak Plagues New England Schools

14 September – ABC News reported an unprecedented [mold](#) outbreak, following the region's rainy, humid summer, has delayed the opening of school for thousands of youngsters across New England and left some districts with six-figure cleanup bills. More than 50 schools in Massachusetts alone reported mold problems after districts began reopening and cleaning their buildings in August, said Suzanne Condon, assistant commissioner for environmental health for the Massachusetts health department. [View Article](#)

## Second Elderly Canadian Dies after West Nile Infection

13 September – Yahoo News reported a second elderly Canadian man infected with the mosquito-borne [West Nile virus](#) has died, Saskatchewan health officials said. "An elderly man in his eighties died on Tuesday, September 9, with investigations indicating West Nile as the primary cause of death," a statement from the province's health department said Friday. Tests are expected to confirm the diagnosis. About one week ago, an infected 92-year-old man died in an Ottawa hospital. Canada's health ministry estimates some 303 people have been infected, while 24 of those cases have been confirmed. The central plains provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta have been the hardest hit. [View Article](#)

## West Nile Virus in the United States as of September 17, 2003



[View Source](#)

## USPACOM

### Bangladesh: 3 Babies Die after Receiving "Measles Vaccine"

15 September – ProMed reported 3 infants died while 6 others fell sick yesterday, having been injected with "[measles vaccine](#)" on Thursday at an EPI (Extended Program of Immunization) center at Sabilapur in Melandah Upazila. The dead, each aged about 10 months, were from Sabilapur village. Their bodies were sent to Jamalpur General Hospital for autopsy. The UNO said the cause of death will be determined after autopsy. An expert team is expected to arrive here today for further investigation. Meanwhile, 6 others became sick after taking the vaccines and are undergoing treatment in different hospitals. Melandah Health Complex sources said the vaccines were made by Serum Institute of India Ltd. A case was filed with Melandah Police Station. [View Report](#)

### China: Human Rabies Cases on the Increase

11 September – ProMed reported [rabies](#) is claimed to be the No. 1 killer in China among major infectious diseases. Nearly 550 people contracted rabies in the first half of 2003, 90 more than in 2002. The country's health and quarantine authorities have mapped out an inspection scheme to check the spread of the disease. The reasons behind the increase in the number of human rabies cases are the increasing number of dogs and mismanagement of the canine population, including insufficient and improper vaccination against rabies. [View Report](#)

## China Readies 'SARS Hospitals'

15 September – CNN reported Southern China's Guangdong province has designated 158 hospitals for treating [SARS](#) victims as part of preparations for a possible re-emergence of the disease, official newspapers have reported. Those hospitals will provide at least 532 beds for SARS patients, each equipped with a respirator and diagnostic equipment, the Communist Party's People's Daily reported. Designated hospitals must also have at least one bedside X-ray machine and an ambulance outfitted to isolate SARS patients, the report said. Their isolated fever wards should also have separate reception areas, pharmacies, laboratories, and cashiers, it said. [View Article](#)

## Domestic Violence on Rise in HK

15 September – BBC News reported figures released by the police in Hong Kong suggest there has been a massive increase in cases of domestic violence. The statistics for the first six months of this year show that reported acts of violence between couples were up 40% on the previous year. Social welfare organizations have blamed the pressure caused by the territory's economic difficulties for the increase. In the first six months of this year, there were 1,075 violent incidents between partners reported to the police. Last year there were just 767 reported during the same period. [View Article](#)

## Hundreds of Chinese Students Sickened by Food Poisoning at Army Base

11 September – ProMed reported [food poisoning](#) among students participating in a training program at a Chinese military facility sent 222 people to the hospital, China's Xinhua News Agency reported. No deaths were reported in the incident in Tianjin, a port city east of the capital Beijing, and most patients were discharged Thu, 11 Sep 2003, after a night in the hospital, the report said. The outbreak was blamed on spoiled chicken and sausage served the day before to students from 4 polytechnic schools who were on a 10-day training program at the facility. Doctors said most of the students had vomiting, diarrhea, and fever, the report said. Similar large-scale food poisoning cases are reported regularly in China, usually blamed on lax hygiene or the mistaken use of industrial chemicals in food preparation. [View Report](#)

## India: Anthrax Reappears in Orissa, 10 afflicted

14 September – ProMed reported at least 10 people in Orissa's Raigada district are reported have contracted [anthrax](#), the cattle disease that killed 7 in the same area during August 2003. All the cases have been reported from Malpguda, a tribal village, over the past week. Last week, 6 goats died in Malpguda village of suspected anthrax. The villagers, in all probability, were infected after eating the improperly cooked meat. The district administration has constituted a task force of health officials, who have been visiting the affected villages to monitor the situation. The main hurdle they faced was the tribals' resistance to taking medicine, he said. [View Report](#)

## India: Dengue Fever Update

15 September – ProMed reported on a number of [Dengue Fever](#) Outbreaks in India. A total of 39 cases of dengue have been reported during 2003 in New Delhi. Municipal health officer KN Tiwari said, out of the 39 cases which have come to light, only 25 were contracted in the city. The other 14 patients are suspected to have acquired the infection from neighboring states. The fresh cases have been reported from central, west, and Najafgarh zones. In Batala, even as the district health authorities denied that it could be dengue, more than 50 cases of viral fever with dengue-type symptoms have been reported in this industrial town in the last 4 days. While no deaths have been reported so far, more than 8 serious cases have been referred to Amritsar and Ludhiana hospitals. In

Ponda, an 8 year old girl succumbed in Manipal Hospital recently. The hospital authorities certified the death as due to dengue. However, the health authorities in the state denied the existence of dengue disease in the state. [View Report](#)

## India: Encephalitis Kills 63 in Northern India (Uttar Pradesh)

11 September – ProMed reported [mosquito-borne encephalitis](#) has killed at least 63 people, mostly children, in northern India in the past 4 weeks, a health official said. The death toll could increase, because authorities are awaiting reports from remote areas of Gorakhpur district in Uttar Pradesh state, said Dr. Diwakar Sinha, a senior official in the state's health department. "At least 425 cases were registered and 63 have died," Sinha said. The deaths in Uttar Pradesh brought the nationwide death toll from the virus to 336 so far in 2003. Earlier this year, at least 273 people died in 2 other Indian states, where scientists said most of the deaths were caused by a virus in the same family as [Japanese encephalitis virus](#). Another health official in Uttar Pradesh said the victims mostly lived in the outskirts of villages or near water-logged paddy fields. Mosquito-borne diseases have been spread partly by stronger-than-normal monsoon rains in many parts of India in 2003. [View Report](#)

## India: Leptospirosis and Undiagnosed Deaths

14 September – ProMed reported at least 27 people in south Gujarat have lost their lives to [leptospirosis](#), a disease spread by rodents, in less than a week. Officials said 177 victims of the disease from 131 villages are under treatment. The disease has spread in Surat, Navasari and Valsad districts. Surat Medical College has initiated various steps to contain the outbreak and send medicines to affected villages. Meanwhile, a mysterious fever has claimed 4 lives in 3 days in Borisana village in Gandhinagar district, 60 km from here. As many as 150 patients are suffering from the disease that is yet to be diagnosed by medical experts. Medical teams from civil hospitals in the capital Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad rushed to the village to collect blood samples and are carrying out the tests. [View report](#) [View Report 2](#)

## Japan: Hepatitis B Virus Contamination in 37 Units of Donated Blood

14 September – ProMed reported among 6400 units of blood for transfusion the government ordered the Japan Red Cross Society to test, 37 were found to be contaminated with [hepatitis B virus \(HBV\)](#). According to the sources, the 37 blood units probably have been used. The Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry told the society to immediately test for HBV those who received the contaminated blood. The Ministry said blood products made from the HBV-tainted blood went through a virus inactivation process, and there was "a very small chance of infection" among those who received the products. The ministry will decide whether to recall the products after experts evaluate the risks. The society has so far tested 293 units of blood for HBV. Further cases of contamination may yet be found in future tests, the Ministry said. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

## Nepal: 69 Japanese Encephalitis Deaths so far in 2003

10 September – ProMed reported 69 people have died in Nepal this year from [Japanese encephalitis](#), an inflammation of the brain caused by a virus transmitted by mosquitoes, the Health Ministry said. A total of 330 people have sought treatment for encephalitis. 15 of Nepal's 75 districts are still at risk this season from the disease, which is prevalent during the monsoon season, said an official at the health ministry's disease control division. The most affected areas of Nepal were in the Terai, the humid lowland area bordering India that accounts for more than 40 percent of the kingdom's population. In India, Health Minister Sushma Swaraj said that as of 4 Aug 2003 there had been 639 cases of encephalitis in the country this year, including 275 deaths. [View Report](#)

## Thailand: Brucellosis Outbreak -- 40 People Infected

10 September – ProMed reported about 40 people in Ratchaburi province are believed to have been infected [brucellosis](#) from exposure to unpasteurized goat milk. Livestock officials have killed more than 250 infected animals and were carrying out further tests on livestock. Brucellosis has been spreading in the western province since early September 2003. Livestock officials found 256 infected goats on 10 farms in Suan Phung district. The animals were killed and buried on Monday and their owners compensated. Thousands of goats are raised in Ratchaburi, mostly in Suan Phung and Muang districts, and Ban Kha sub-district. Dr Jaruthas Narischart, Ratchaburi public health chief, said the infection was confirmed in 2 patients while 40 others were under observation. The disease can be fatal if complications are not adequately treated. Blood samples from over 3000 goats in Ratchaburi had been sent to laboratories in Bangkok for tests, he said. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

## Typhoon Maemi Hits South Korea Hard

16 September – The Asia Times reported the most powerful typhoon ever to hit South Korea killed at least 84 people and caused severe damage to property and industrial facilities including five nuclear power plants. Typhoon Maemi also caused serious disruptions in rail and air traffic and rendered 1.4 million homes powerless. Officials at the Central Anti-Disaster Headquarters said that the casualty toll and property damage could rise as communications with remote and isolated areas were being restored. The typhoon landed on Korea's south coast and crawled northeast across the width of the southern part of South Korea before disappearing into the East Sea (Sea of Japan). It dumped as much as 425 millimeters of rain over the area. [View Article](#)

# USSOUTHCOM

## USSOUTHCOM Dengue Fever Update

15 September – ProMed reported From Jan to Aug 2003, 756 cases of [Dengue Fever](#) have been reported in the Brazilian municipality of Rio Branco do Acre, compared with 798 throughout 2002. Since the rains are now starting, the situation is expected to get worse. The Minister of Health Maria del Rocio Saenz said on Thursday that the number of cases of dengue in Costa Rica in 2003 has now passed 10,550, and includes 28 cases of DHF. In 2002, 12,251 cases were seen at hospitals. Since the rains are now starting, it is feared that the worst is yet to come in 2003. [View Report](#)

## Outbreak of *Plasmodium vivax* Malaria in San Juan del Oro, Peru

12 September – PAHO reported according to the Ministry of Health of Peru, since June 2003 there has been an increase in the number of [malaria](#) cases produced by *Plasmodium vivax* in the District of San Juan del Oro (Province of Sandia, Puno), which has been reported by the health authorities as an outbreak. Said outbreak began on 20 June 2003 and has continued to the present time, although there has been a decline in the number of cases over the past few weeks. Up to 23 August, a total of 216 confirmed cases of *P. vivax* malaria were reported. The outbreak has taken place in a rural setting, mainly affecting male agricultural workers between the ages of 15 and 44. La Pampa Grande is the most affected of these, with an attack rate of 511 per 1000 inhabitants. [View Article](#)

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